

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
BOARD OF REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

MINUTES

Thursday, April 25, 2002

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bonnie R. Atwood
D. Carter McGlothlin
Teresa K. Schwartz
Jane S. Smith
Loretta H. Tate, Vice Chairperson
Edmond Turner

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Tonya J. Davis, Chairperson
Hon. Dorcas R. Hardy

OTHERS:

Judith K. Ashley, *Assistant Commissioner, Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center*
Philip W. Benton, *Fiscal Director*
C. Denise Goode, *Policy Analyst*
Kathyrn A. Hayfield, *Assistant Commissioner & Legislative Liaison*
Alvin R. Jones, *Assistant Commissioner, Field Rehabilitation Services*
Elizabeth E. Smith, *Director, Policy and Planning*
F. Dale South, *Director, Internal Audit*
James A. Rothrock, *Acting Commissioner*
Barbara G. Tyson, *Administrative Staff Specialist, Commissioner's Office*
Roy J. Ward, *Former Board Member*
Robert A. Watts, Jr., *Director, Disability Determination Services*

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairperson Tate called the Board of Rehabilitative Services' meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. at the Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS), Richmond, Virginia.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Vice Chairperson Tate introduced Edmond "Ed" Turner, the new Board member, and Roy Ward, a former Board Member.

II. APPROVAL OF PROPOSED AGENDA

On proper motion, the agenda was adopted as distributed. The motion was seconded and carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On proper motion, the minutes of the January 24, 2002, meeting were approved as distributed. The motion was seconded and carried.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC COMMENT

None

III. COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Rothrock reported that DRS had received two interesting grants since the last Board meeting, (1) the Virginia Tech (VT) University \$502,000, four-year, AgrAbility Grant which the agency is working with VT and an array of other agencies to provide education, assistance, and support to farmers and ranchers with disabilities so they can overcome barriers to continuing their chosen professions in agriculture or start a farming career, (2) the three-year \$300,000 Traumatic Brain Injury Act Implementation Grant to establish three Regional Brain Injury Resource Centers statewide. This is an increasing population due to the advanced medical technology available.

He stated that the General Assembly Veto Session had concluded and DRS budgets would be reduced 3% for the current year, and 4% for each of the two subsequent years. He reiterated that this lesser reduction was made possible because of Governor Warner's and Secretary Woods' commitment to provide a "safety net" for the most fragile and most vulnerable citizens in Virginia. Budget plans are currently being developed.

Commissioner Rothrock reported that he recently attended a Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation meeting in Bethesda, Maryland. This meeting is held twice a year and it brings together agency heads from across the United States to share information. He stated he was amazed at how far ahead Virginia is in the following services: (1) transitioning services for youth who transition from school to work, (2) persons who have long-term mentally ill disabilities, (3) temporary assistance to needy families which is the welfare to work model, (4) the Workforce Investment Act, which replaced the Job Training Partnership Act, and is the method services are provided through the Virginia Employment Commission. He could not emphasize enough how far ahead Virginia is compared with other states.

He reported on the Federal legislation, Ticket-to-Work, which is a way the Social Security Administration is trying to get Social Security Disability recipients back to work. He briefly explained that Social Security recipients in Virginia will receive a voucher that they can take to participating businesses and ask for help in getting employment. When they give the ticket (voucher) to the entity, there are two options: (1) the entity will be reimbursed the cost of getting the person back to work, or (2) the entity will receive the benefits the person would have received had they stayed on disability a number of years. DRS is sending several staff to a Ticket to Work meeting to be held in Seattle, Washington, along with other participants

from Virginia, to review the best practices for getting persons receiving Social Security disability benefits back to work.

Commissioner Rothrock added that another important issue is the Medicaid Buy-In. DRS is working with the Department of Medical Assistance Services to review how the State of Virginia can provide some of the up-front money to guarantee that an individual can review a job without having an either or situation, either I go to work or I receive benefits. He stated that the Ticket-to-Work with the Medicaid Buy-In will help DRS get some persons with severe disabilities back to work.

Commissioner Rothrock reported that the 911 report submitted to the agency from the Rehabilitation Services Administration is a way to track DRS' vocational rehabilitation progress.

He stated that the current Federal administration has proposed moving the supported employment funds back into the basic State grant under the assumption that supported employment should now be fully integrated into the systems around the United States. What this would do, possibly in some states, is lose the focus on supported employment. He stated a more pragmatic approach is that now it goes from an unmatched fund to a fund that needs to be matched. He stated he would research the matter and get back with Mr. Turner or any other members interested. Virginia is tracking the issue.

Mr. McGlothlin apprised Commissioner Rothrock of a problem that Russell County is having getting the referrals out of the one-stop center from the Virginia Employment Commission to DRS. He stated that they are having a 46% success rate of getting folks back to work by working with the DRS counselor, Randy Harris.

Commissioner Rothrock introduced Dale South, Internal Audit Director, and Denise Goode, Policy Analyst who is working on housing and constituent affairs for DRS. Ms. Goode reported that she had recently visited Scott County Vocational School which she stated was probably the best model she has visited. She stated that youth who were from poverty level homes were making approximately \$1800 per week after graduating from the welding program. Major companies, including companies in Japan, were waiting for graduates. The graphic design program has won four national awards. It is an amazing example of collaboration. She is hoping that this is one of the good models that the Governor will review when he develops his plans for vocational education.

IV. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

At Chairperson Tate's request, Commissioner Rothrock read and presented Roy Ward with a Resolution honoring him for his leadership, dedication, and hard work on behalf of the Board of Rehabilitative Services and individuals with disabilities throughout the Commonwealth. The Resolution will be signed by the Chairperson and mailed to Mr. Ward. Mr. Ward thanked the Board for the resolution.

V. PROGRAM COMMITTEE REPORT

Ms. Smith reported that the Program Committee met with Judith Smith, Operation's Manager for the Field Rehabilitation Services (FRS) Division, prior to the full Board meeting. She distributed copies of the FRS Division map, vocational rehabilitation process, program

briefing, organizational charts, and consumer success stories. She complimented Ms. Smith on preparing such a quality product.

VI. LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Ms. Atwood stated that she, Ms. Schwartz, and Mr. Ward meet with Ms. Hayfield prior to the full Board meeting. She distributed copies of the Community Based Services Division fact sheet, funding sheets, and organizational chart. She thanked Ms. Hayfield for providing such informative information.

Commissioner Rothrock apprised the Board of a letter DRS is drafting for Secretary Woods to send to George Newstrom, Secretary of Technology, that the Secretariats develop a plan that will advance research and new technologies to respond to the talents and needs of Virginians with disabilities. It calls for a renewed partnership among the Center for Innovative Technology, the Department of Information Technology, and the Disability Services Agencies. This will maximize the opportunities that technology affords Virginians with disabilities.

VII. FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. McGlothlin met with Mr. Benton prior to the full Board meeting. He reported that DRS has not received any direct reductions in funding from the Federal level at this time, but got only a 2 ½% increase. He also mentioned that there will be no reductions in direct services and that DRS is looking at the top side for reductions instead of the bottom side.

VIII. BOARD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Ms. Atwood mentioned that the Board Development Committee had a conference call on March 21, 2002, and referred to the minutes distributed with the Board Packets.

Jane Smith moved that the Board adjourn into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing to discuss personnel issues. The motion was seconded and carried. The Board entered into Executive Session. No action was taken in Executive Session.

Jane Smith moved that while the Board was in Executive Session, they just discussed the personnel issues that were proposed. The motion was seconded and carried.

IX. WORKING LUNCH

X. DRS PROGRAM REPORTS

Finance Report

Mr. Benton distributed and reported on the DRS, Budget Performance for Quarter Ended March 31, 2002 (copy attached).

Field Rehabilitation Services' Overview

Mr. Jones read a report outlining the services provided by the Field Rehabilitation Services Division.

Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center's Overview

Ms. Ashley showed a Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center video. She also reported that Carter Hall's renovation is scheduled for completion in August, Project Train IT will end in December, Teleconferencing Grant at second level, and that the cooperative agreement with the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired has produced several visually impaired constituents who have completed their program and are now employed. She distributed copies of the "Guide to Programs and Services".

Disability Determination Services' Overview

Mr. Watts explained Social Security Administration's (SSA) possible changes in Process Unification, reconsideration which is the second step of the disability determination process, and types of claims being reviewed. He stated that if these changes occur, the Disability Determination Services Division could not handle the claims with the number of current employees. There is a new Social Security Commissioner, Joanne Barnhart, who was formerly on the advisory SSA Board.

Mr. Watts stated that it helps to expedite a claim if the claimant brings current, at least within 6 months, medical evidence.

Community Based Services' Overview

Ms. Hayfield provided the Board with a brief history of Virginia's DRS and other related disability programs beginning in 1920 through 1997 (copy attached).

Standards and Indicators/DPB Performance Measures

Commissioner Rothrock stated that this is an item that he hopes the Board can routinely monitor.

Liz Smith provided and reviewed specific information on the Rehabilitation Services Administration's standards and indicators for the vocational rehabilitation program (copy attached). The Commissioner reported that at a recent meeting, RSA officials mentioned it wanted to reward States by giving significant awards for doing well. Further information will be shared as received. Ms. Smith encouraged members to go www.dpb.state.va.us, Virginia Results, to review Virginia State agency's performance measures. Ms. Smith suggested that performance measures be developed for the Community Based Services Division.

XI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

XII. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Atwood will provide members individually with information regarding Mr. Boggs' death and what she is coordinating in his memory.

Mr. Ward thanked the Board for lunch, the resolution, and the clock.

Commissioner Rothrock asked the Board members to relate to Ms. Tyson anything they particularly liked or disliked about the Board meeting or any ideas for future meetings. He stated a follow up on indicators will be shared at the July meeting. He asked Ms. Atwood to let him know of any legislative items the Legislative Committee might want to review for the next session.

Jane Smith complimented the Commissioner on the meeting.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on July 25, 2002, at the Department of Rehabilitative Services, Richmond, Virginia.